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ABSTRACT

A method for matching leadership mentors with beginning teachers is described in this paper, with emphasis on personality types and psychosocial characteristics. A review of literature on guide matching concludes that research is inconclusive and that matching is often based on availability. Five fundamental assumptions of the personnel matching approach are then outlined. Four mentor-protege styles are described: supportive, directive, facilitative, and scientific. An instrument, which is an adaptation of the Sayers-Kirsch Leadership Matrix (1978), is being developed and pilot tested for the placement of individuals into one of the four groupings. A conclusion is that mentoring is not dependent upon participants' sharing similar leadership styles, but upon the ability to build upon sameness or difference. A behavioral characteristics rating form is included. (LMI)

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A METHOD FOR MATCHING

LEADERSHIP MENTORS AND PROTEGES

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A METHOD FOR MATCHING

LEADERSHIP MENTORS AND PROTEGES

In response to many calls for educational reforms, a number of states are currently revising the standards that they use in certifying and licensing professional educators. Special attention is also being directed to the ways in which newly hired teachers and other educators are brought "on board" to their first positions. Induction, or the initial orientation of individuals to new professional roles, is the focus of many of the recent suggestions for improvement. In addition, efforts are being directed to improve the preservice preparation and ongoing inservice education of educators.

A common element in many of the schemes designed to support the professional development of educators involves the use of mentors who might be able to work with personnel as a way to provide ongoing assistance and guidance to individuals as they proceed through the many traumas associated with their careers. These mentors are typically defined as experienced and successful practitioners who "know the ropes" concerning the field of professional education, in general, and the specific characteristics of at least one school district.

During the past five years, we have had experience with the development of skills associated with mentoring for aspiring and beginning school leaders. In this paper, we describe the work we have been involved with most recently regarding the development of a technique which might be used to match those who serve as leadership mentors with those who are to be mentored. For the most part, this matching has been carried out with little attention to finding appropriate overlaps between the needs of mentors and proteges. "Marriages of convenience" have been the rule. This has been

unfortunate because the majority of settings in which we have worked have indicated a strong preference for the identification of more thoughhtful ways to bring about the pairing of individuals who would be linked in the mentoring relationship.

Existing Research to Guide Matching

Processes utilized in the effective matching of mentors with proteges depends on several factors. Literature on this subject, as well as numerous earlier research projects, has identified several of the issues associated with the search for reasonable approaches to the matching dilemma. Issues and factors might be classified according to two broad categories. One might be described as issues that are contextual or circumstantial in nature. Examples of these might include such things as the gender, levels of experience, and the ages of those who would serve as mentors, as compared with the corresponding characteristics of their proteges. Numerous studies (Gilmour, 1983; Kreps, 1987; Walker, 1985) have been carried out to determine the ideal matches of mentors and proteges according to these factors. For example, Follon (1983) studied whether or not women necessarily need to be mentored by other women in order to make such relationships effective.

At least two general observations might be made concerning the research which has looked at the matching of mentors with proteges according to circumstantial factors. First, while these studies represent the majority of investigations into this topic, they leave us with a fairly unclear picture of what the "correct" course should be followed in the effort to match mentors with proteges in a successful and mutually-enhancing fashion. Studies of gender differences indicate that women prefer to have women as mentors, but there are no clear suggestions that women necessarily make better mentors to female colleagues. There is a strong suggestion found in the literature that effective mentors should be considerably older than their proteges. However, there are no absolute and

persistent findings to show that those who are younger than their proteges are not able to serve as effective professional mentors. In short, research related to the circumstantial factors which deal with the matching of mentors to proteges has been abundant, but inconclusive.

A second observation regarding the limitations of research in this tradition concerns the practical applications that may be made of the findings. In the majority of cases where mentoring programs have been established in education, they represent mandated efforts to ensure that educators have someone to connect with in the area of professional growth and development. In cases such as these, it is not likely that any efforts would be made to match mentors with proteges according to criteria other than simple availability.

The second broad category of suggested approaches to effective mentor-protege matching is based on the suggestion that matching might best be carried out according to an analysis of personality types or other psycho-social characteristics of the mentor and the protege. It is in this tradition that we have tended to carry out our recent work which has been directed toward finding ways in which two people might find effective ways to work together in mentoring relationships.

Fundamental Assumptions

Our efforts to find a way to guide the matching of mentors with proteges through an analysis of different personality styles are based on the following assumptions:

1. People behave according to specific behavioral styles. This is because people differ in how they perceive a situation, work at tasks, interact with others, and make decisions.
2. People behave differently depending on the circumstances. Behavior changes.
3. There is no single "right" way for people to behave, but most people have an operating style that is most common and comfortable for them.

4. What is comfortable and "right" for one person feels uncomfortable and "wrong" to another.
5. Organizations benefit and function best when they capitalize on the strengths of each individual, and encourage the celebration of differences.

Beyond these assumptions, we also believe that the effective matching of mentors does not mean that ther should necessarily be an effort to pair similar behavioral styles as teams. It is quite possible that effective mentoring can take place between people who possess wholly different approaches to working in organizations, or personality styles. What is critical in the mentoring process is that individual are able to appreciate differences and, when differences exist in styles, these can be used to guide the development of effective relationships.

Alternative Mentor-Protege Styles

We believe that four basic behavioral styles exist which might be used to describe individuals, regardless of whether they are classified as "mentors" or "proteges." Brief descriptions of each of these four styles are as follows:

1. **Supportive Style:** This style demonstrates a high degree of respect for interpersonal relations. Individuals who possess this style try to minimize conflict and promote the happiness of everybody. Some people see the supportive style as accommodating and friendly, while others might view it as "wishy-washy." Those who are supportive tend to whatever may be needed to please others, but this may leave them frequently overcommitted. Supportive types are highly people-oriented individuals who will generally rely on others to give directions about how to get tasks done.
2. **Directive Style:** Individuals who demonstrate this style love to run things and have others do the job their way. These people are viewed as highly businesslike and efficient by some,

while others view them as threatening and unfeeling. These people want to make sure that the job gets done, and they get impatient with lengthy descriptions about effective process.

3. Facilitative Style: Facilitators tend to get involved with people in active, rapidly changing situations. They are seen as socially outgoing and fiendly, imaginative and vigorous. Some view this style as dynamic and energetic while others perceive the same behavior as highly egotistical. These individuals tend to be viewed as highly creative people who are also likely to generate ideas with little practical follow-through or concern for details.
4. Scientific Style: This style places great emphasis on problem solving and conceptual skills. Those who approach issues in this style tend to want much date before they make any decisions. As a result, they are viewed by others as methodical and thorough, although this behavior might frustrate some who look at their behavior as too slow.

Applications

It has been our practice to suggest that mentors and proteges come from all four of these styles, and also that mentors classified as "Supportive" might be able to work effectively with proteges described as "Facilitative." The issue is not to find overlap, but to appreciate the nature of differences as they might relate to mentor-protege relationships.

We have been involved with the development and pilot testing of a brief instrument which may used in the placement of individuals into one of the four style groupings. The instrument is an adaptation of the Leadership Matrix developed by Sayers-Kirsch (1978). Once mentors and proteges have had a chance to analyze their responses to the instrument, and understand which of the four styles is most reflective of their own approach, the critical issue is to learn how similarities and

dissimilarities of style may impact either positively or negatively on mentoring relationships. Again, we believe that mentoring is not dependent upon people always having the same styles. Rather, we believe that it is considerably more effective when people are able to build upon sameness or difference, both of which are typically "givens" when organizations create mentoring programs.

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS RATING FORM

DIRECTIONS: Circle one of the numbers to indicate how you see yourself. For example:

Dominant 1 2 3 4 Easy-Going

1.	Appears confident	1	2	3	4	Reserved
2.	Passive	1	2	3	4	Aggressive
3.	Responsive	1	2	3	4	Self-controlled
4.	Easy-Going	1	2	3	4	Dominant
5.	Takes charge	1	2	3	4	Goes along
6.	Formal	1	2	3	4	Informal
7.	Disciplined	1	2	3	4	Spontaneous
8.	Communicates readily	1	2	3	4	Hesitant communicator
9.	Accepting	1	2	3	4	Challenging
10.	Appears unorganized	1	2	3	4	Appears organized
11.	Initiates social contact	1	2	3	4	Lets others initiate
12.	Asks questions	1	2	3	4	Makes statements
13.	Overbearing	1	2	3	4	Shy
14.	Reserved	1	2	3	4	Fun loving
15.	Appears active	1	2	3	4	Appears thoughtful
16.	Relaxed	1	2	3	4	Assertive
17.	Withholds feeling	1	2	3	4	Expresses feeling
18.	Relationship oriented	1	2	3	4	Task oriented
19.	Pushy	1	2	3	4	Gentle
20.	Discriminating	1	2	3	4	Impulsive
21.	Extrovert	1	2	3	4	Introvert
22.	Warm	1	2	3	4	Cool
23.	Subtle	1	2	3	4	Direct
24.	Distant	1	2	3	4	Close
25.	States information	1	2	3	4	Saves information
26.	Quiet	1	2	3	4	Talkative

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